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Not Losing the 'Pilgrimage' in the Pilgrimage Tourism Experience.

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Guest editors

Kevin Griffin and Razaq Raj

Introduction

In recent years, the topic of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage has emerged as a distinct area of academic investigation. While the origins of tourism and travel are lost in the mists of time it is accepted by many scholars that recreational travel is inherently linked (albeit in a complicated way) to religious and faith based travel. Emerging from Smith's 1977 seminal work *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, and the work of authors such as Turner and Turner (1978) and Cohen (1979), the study of religious travel has never been far from the centre of academic discourse – in areas such as religious studies, anthropology and sociology. However it took a little longer to become a mainstream topic in the emerging tourism literature. This evolution can be seen by contrasting two volumes of *Annals of Tourism Research*. In 1983 (Vol. 10:1) a number of papers in an edited volume by Nelson H.H Graburn touched tangentially on the topic. The 1992 volume (Vol. 19:1) edited by Valene Smith, however, contains a very influential set of papers by the likes of Eade, Cohen, Rinschede, Nolan & Nolan, Vukonić, Jackowski & Smith and Hudman & Jackson. These papers have paved the way for much of what has been subsequently published in academic tourism literature.

In 2000, seeing a need for a specialist group to examine Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage, a Special Interest Group of researchers was formed under the banner of ATLAS (the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education). Since then, the group have published two volumes of papers with ATLAS (Fernandes, McGettigan and Edwards, 2003; Griffin and Raj, 2012) and Razaq Raj, a member of the group has also published one of the key textbooks on the topic (Raj and Morpeth, eds, 2007). The group have also published collections of papers in special editions of the *International Journal of Business and Globalisation* (Raj, Griffin, Fernandez & Morpeth, 2011) and the *International Journal of Tourism Policy* (Raj & Griffin, 2012). This current volume which we have titled 'Not Losing the "Pilgrimage" in the Pilgrimage Tourism Experience' continues our series of papers, by bringing together

an eclectic set of works which were originally presented to a workshop in Maynooth, Ireland in June 2012.

This publication starts with a paper by two of our stalwarts Peter Wiltshier & Alan Clarke, who develop their ideas about partnership and the importance of stakeholder engagement in maintaining the religiosity of sites which are open to the public. Karl A. Russell & Noëlle O'Connor then present a paper on Muslim participation in sport, with an emphasis on the Olympic Games. While not looking at pilgrimage in the generally understood sense, this paper examines an important sport 'pilgrimage' - the Olympics - and explores challenging ideas such as its future in light of issues related to gender and faith etc. In his paper, which focuses on Lithuanian secular and sacred sites, Darius Liutikas explores the concept of valuistic journeys, which is an alternative term which he uses for pilgrimage, and includes travels motivated by religious, national, cultural or other collective ideals, or motivations which are unique to the individual. Jonathan M. Wooding's paper is of a more theoretical basis, and discusses how historical perspectives on pilgrimage can be challenging and provocative for modern scholars. Alan Clarke & Ágnes Raffay in their paper provide early findings of their RECULTIVATUR project and highlight, using case studies, the benefits of religious tourism in overall terms. The last paper in the volume, by Elizabeth Ifeyinwa Benson provides a refreshing view of religious tourism in an under-represented area of investigation - Africa, by exploring the profile of three different pilgrimage sites in Nigeria.

As these papers demonstrate, and as can be seen in the preceding discussion, Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage has become a vibrant and lively topic for analysis and discussion. Our group continue to collaborate with colleagues in running events and have an exciting set of locations planned for future conferences.

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